

VA



U.S. Department
of Veterans Affairs

Office of Patient Care Services
Health Outcomes Military Exposures
War Related Illness and Injury Study Center

GWI MERIC

Project 4: OPTIMIZATION OF A WEB-BASED APPROACH FOR EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT OF GULF WAR ILLNESS

Katharine Bloeser, MSW, PhD



PROJECT 4: OPTIMIZATION OF A WEB-BASED APPROACH FOR EVIDENCE-BASED TREATMENT

Project #1 Team

Project Lead: Katharine Bloeser, MSW, PhD

Co-Investigators: Alison Phillips, PhD, Nicole Sullivan, PhD,
Erin Reilly, PhD, Meghan Kelly, PhD, Shou-en Lu, PhD

Operational Partners:

Office of Primary Care

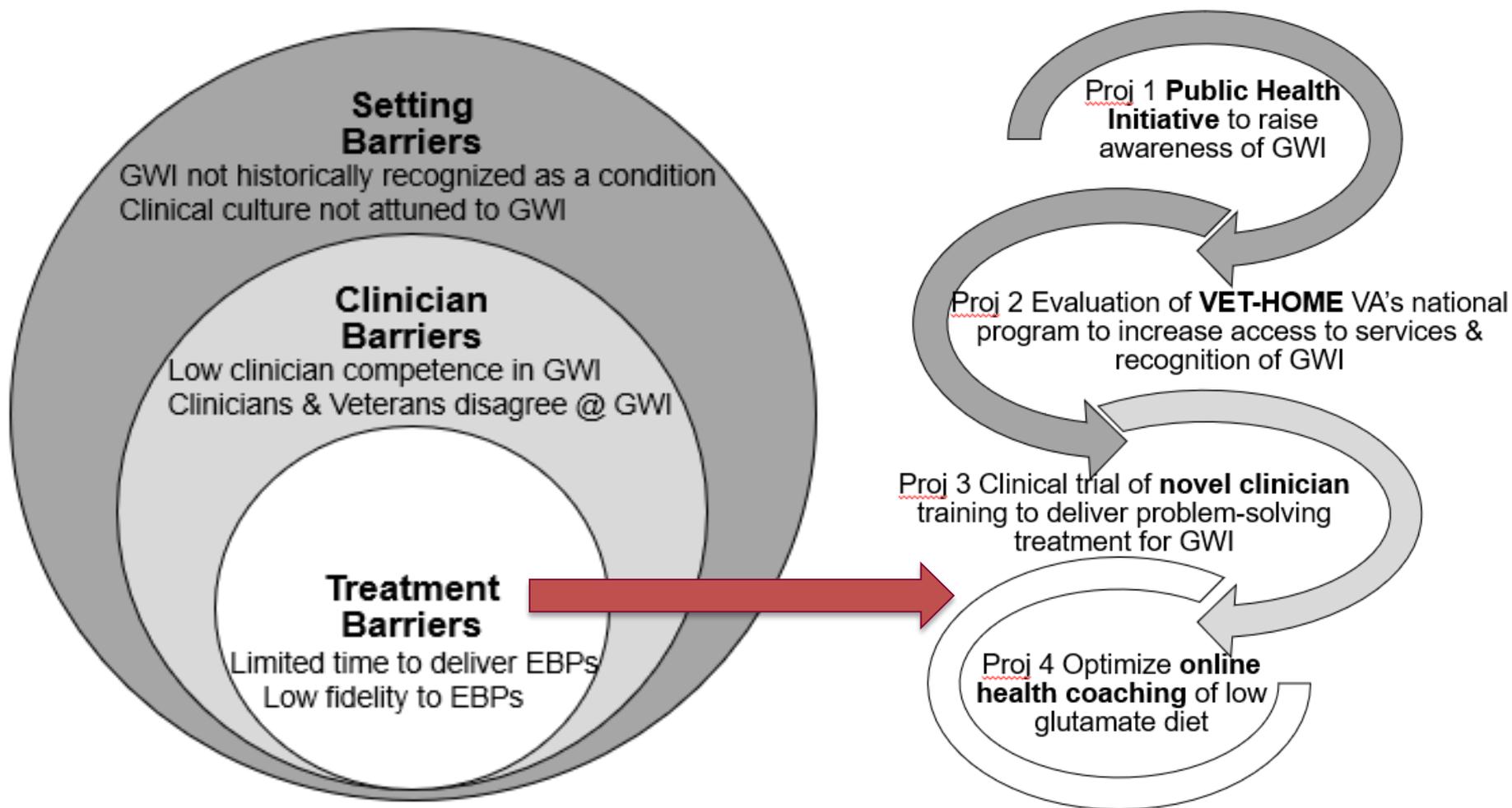
Office of Patient Centered Care and Cultural Transformation

War Related Illness and Injury Study Center



IMPACT

Ensuring Veterans benefit from VA's investment in research on evidence-based practices for treatment of GWI.





WHAT HAVE WE LEARNED?

Low-Glutamate Diet:

This diet restricts the intake of several dietary amino acids, such as glutamate and aspartate. Two clinical trials have identified a low-glutamate diet as particularly efficacious in managing GWI.

Physical Activity:

Graded exercise is recommended for GWI. In a clinical trial, exercise significantly improved fatigue and cognitive symptoms of GWI.

Sleep:

Interventions to improve sleep are shown to decrease fatigue, depression, and posttraumatic stress. Conditions associated with poor sleep can make GWI symptoms worse.

Mind-Body:

Mind-body approaches, like yoga, have been shown to improve chronic pain, fatigue, and cognition.

Social Relationships:

Some of the earliest research on GWI highlights the relationship between symptoms and social support.



HOW DO WE ENSURE VETERANS BENEFIT?



Web-Based Approaches:

- Quickly get new information out
- High-quality information
- Easy to adapt



POTENTIAL PROBLEMS

We like web-based approaches (at first).

56-76% of Veterans are interested in web-based approaches, only 37% of Veterans who start continue to use them.

Interventions need to account for Gulf War Veterans' experiences with health care.

Recommendations to change health behaviors can come across as dismissive and blaming.

Web-based approaches should not be separate from Gulf War Veterans' usual care.

Approaches at the Veteran-level need to be part of a comprehensive care plan.



SOLUTIONS

**Treatments do not
fit with GWVs'
experiences**

**Clinician time constraints
to learn & deliver
treatments**

**Low clinician knowledge
and competence
with GWI**

**Initial Engagement Visit
Follow-up
Coaching Calls**

My Best Self

**Consultation letter
Discussion prompts
for GWVs**



MY BEST SELF

Health Coaching for Persistent Physical Symptoms

Presented by the War Related Illness and Injury Study Center, Veterans Health Administration

Congratulations

Congratulations on completing the course! See how you did overall at My Progress. To review any module, just select it. You can also review or continue using the Food Log.



Course Progress

8 of 8 Modules Completed

Helpful Resources

In addition to what you will find in this course, the VA provides information you may find useful. Some of the key materials are available on the Resources page.

[View Resources](#)

Review Your Work

To see the work you have completed for the course so far, use the Review Progress link. You can also go back to the course content for any module you have completed by selecting the module in the progress bar. View the Food Log to see the meals you recorded.

[View Food Log](#)

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OPTIMIZATION

Intake Engagement Visit. Meet with a health coach for an initial intake engagement visit to develop a shared understanding of GWI and the rationale for health coaching as a treatment for GWI.

Coaching Follow-up Sessions. Coaching sessions will focus on utilizing coaching principles such as motivational interviewing, problem-solving, and goal setting to help the veteran overcome any obstacles in accomplishing goals.

Consultation Letter. A letter will be sent to the GWV's primary care team with: (1) information about GWI, (2) the evidence-base for health coaching as a treatment for GWI, and (3) a request for the primary care team to follow-up with the GWV about *My Best Self*.

GWV Prompt. A prompt will be sent to the GWV encouraging them to speak with their primary care team about their participation in *My Best Self* and include advice including ways to prepare before the appointment, and tips for communicating with their providers during the visit.



OUTCOMES



- A Web-Based Approach that,**
1. Validates GWVs experience with GWI.
 2. Develops a concordant understanding of GWI.
 3. Creates an action plan to manage GWI.



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